

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Fig. 12. This sheet replaces the original sheet including Fig. 12.

In particular, the reference designators previously appearing as “70” and “72” have been revised to reflect new reference designators “170” and “172” respectively. No other changes have been made to the figure and no new matter has been added to the figure.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet
Annotated Sheet Showing Changes

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-38 and 40-61 remain pending in the application. Applicant, by this paper, amends claims 32, 36, 40, 42, 59, and 60 and cancels claim 39. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims.

Discussion of Objections to the Specification

Applicant amends paragraph [0027] to reflect the change to the reference designators for the end caps. The paragraph was amended to indicate that reference numbers "170" and "172" refer to the end caps. Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the objection in light of the amendment.

Discussion of Objections to the Drawings

Applicant amends Fig. 12 to revise the reference designators used to identify the end caps. The original reference designators "70" and "72" appearing on this figure have been revised to "170" and "172", respectively. No other changes were made to the figure. Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the objection in light of the amendment.

Discussion of Rejections Under Obviousness-Type Double Patenting

Claims 1-61 were rejected under the doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting over U.S. Patent No. 6,619,195. Applicant submits with this correspondence a Terminal Disclaimer disclaiming the term of any patent issuing from this application over the term of U.S. 6,619,195, which this application claims the benefit. Please see the attached Terminal Disclaimer for the exact language of the disclaimer. Applicant respectfully requests allowance of claims 1-38, and 40-61 in light of the Terminal Disclaimer.

Discussion of Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 32-35, 40-47, 59, and 60 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as indefinite for including terms lacking antecedent basis.

Applicant amends claims 32, 40, 42, 59, and 60 to provide antecedent basis for all terms appearing in the claims. Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, in light of the claim amendments.

Discussion of Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 36, and 51-55 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 3,926,032 to Brooks et al. (hereinafter Brooks) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,544,576 to Kato (hereinafter Kato).

Applicant amends claim 36 to include the features of claim 39, and cancels claim 39. Applicant believes that claim 36, as amended, is allowable, because claim 39 was not previously rejected over any prior art references.

Claims 51-55 depend, either directly or indirectly, from claim 36 and are believed to be allowable at least for the reason that they depend from an allowable base claim. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of claim 36, and 51-55.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 858-350-6100.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments
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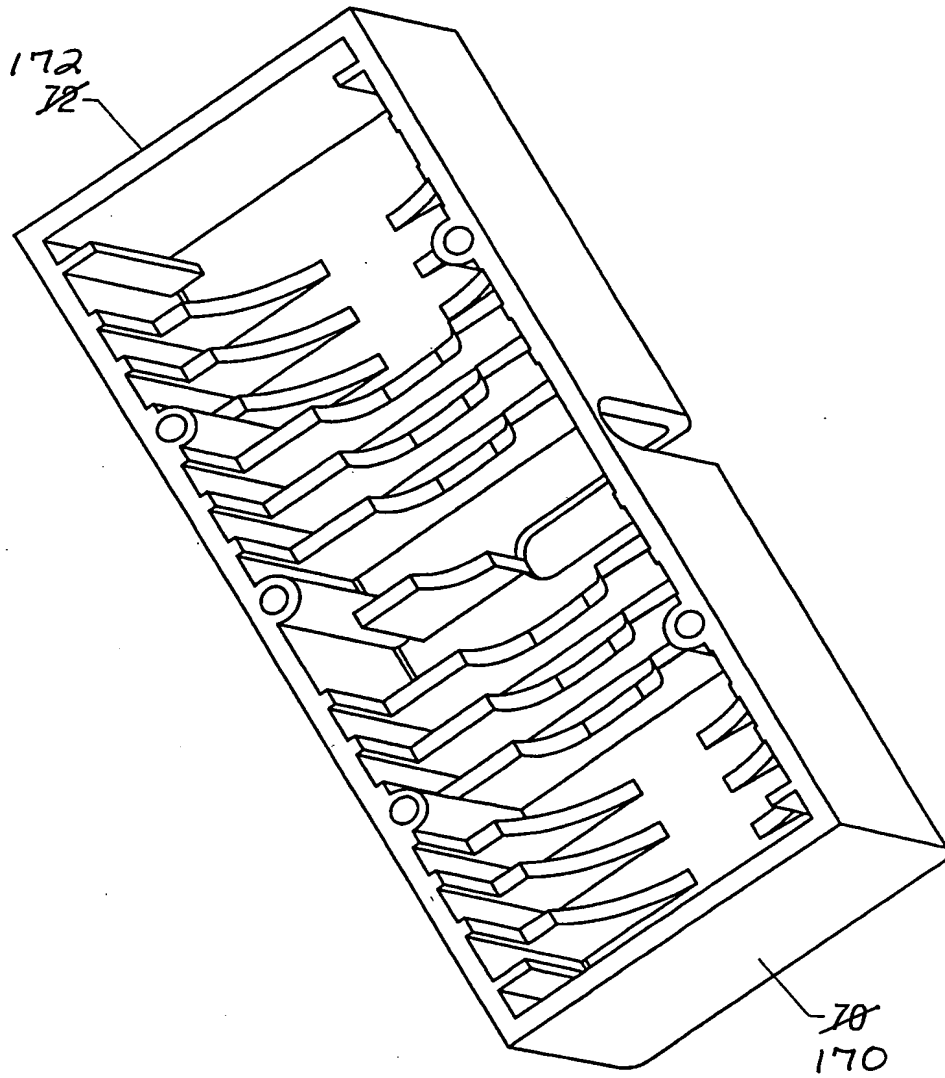


FIG. 12